



**MOORE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023**

The Moore County Board of Commissioners convened for a Special Meeting beginning at 9:00am, Thursday, March 16, 2023, at the Moore County Senior Enrichment Center, 8040 US HWY 15, West End, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting, duly advertised, was for a work session to receive information on homelessness in Moore County and to receive updates regarding recently established task forces.

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Nick Picerno, Vice Chairman Frank Quis, Jim Von Canon, John Ritter, Kurt Cook

Chairman Picerno called the meeting to order. County Manager Wayne Vest offered the invocation and Commissioner Cook led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Picerno shared that a diligent citizen, Mr. Carl Killingstad, kept reminding him of the County's homeless population, and he said another citizen, Mr. Cliff Brown, was leading the fight to help the homeless population. He introduced Mr. Brown to provide additional information to the Board.

Homelessness

Mr. Cliff Brown provided introduction and background information regarding his organization, TeamWorkz. He provided a presentation and handouts, hereby incorporated as a part of these minutes by attachment as Appendix A. Ms. Winona Coveney with Friend to Friend was also present and offered comment regarding her work and confirmed that Friend to Friend received many inquiries for housing from people not experiencing assault or violence.

Mr. Brown reviewed a conceptual plan for a Transition Advancement Center for the homeless that he hoped to bring to fruition. He said he was looking for property and would need about 100 acres, and shared that he had a \$1M pledge. Discussion followed regarding property that had been reviewed and the number of people being served by Mr. Brown and others.

Commissioner Von Canon inquired regarding whether Mr. Brown was encountering any mental health issues and Mr. Brown said the lack of mental health treatment in the County was astounding. Commissioner Von Canon questioned whether other areas may send homeless population to the TAC if built in Moore County

and Mr. Brown noted that measures would be in place to protect the people of Moore County. There was additional discussion regarding the number of homeless in Moore County and there was concurrence among meeting attendees that the numbers were larger than one would presume. Ms. Tambra Chamberlain with Moore County Schools discussed her work assisting homeless students, both in school and as they transitioned to college/military/employment.

Mr. Brown discussed the Point in Time (PIT) count done annually of the homeless population, which in 2019 was about 23 people. He explained that counting was a challenge because Moore County was rural and people were scattered, and many hesitated to participate and therefore could not be counted. He estimated about 600 living homeless in Moore County.

Mr. Brown shared information regarding an open house for TeamWorkz scheduled for March 25 and shared about volunteer opportunities and needs. He especially noted the importance of transportation.

Chairman Picerno invited Ms. Nina Walker, Executive Director for Sandhills Community Action Program to offer comments. Ms. Walker stated her agreement with everything that had been said by Mr. Brown and said homelessness was a huge issue. She said transportation was also a huge issue, as was the lack of affordable housing. She shared that SCAP had recently become aware of a grant opportunity for \$4M for housing for homeless persons and victims of domestic violence, which she indicated could be very helpful. She said she and others were searching for land/sites and they did not want to do too little too late because the problem was growing.

DSS Director Tammy Schrenker agreed that there was a homeless problem in Moore County and said there was also a mental health crisis everywhere. She said Medicaid expansion may help with payment for some but there were still not enough providers to address the needs.

Chairman Picerno inquired regarding how Moore County Transportation Services played into transportation needs. Ms. Winona Coveney (Friend to Friend) noted that MCTS had very limited hours and currently was not accepting new applications. Ms. Schrenker agreed and explained its unavailability for evening hours, and noted there was not a public transportation route.

Chairman Picerno called for a ten-minute recess.

Upon reconvening at 10:45am, Chairman Picerno discussed that information shared had been valuable and eye-opening. He said the Board wanted to see how it could help and it would take a lot of cooperation and teamwork, including from private agencies. He thanked everyone for their participation. He asked if the commissioners thought creation of task force on this issue could be helpful and each commissioner commented and agreed that a task force could be helpful. Chairman Picerno noted the task force appointment could be added to the Board's upcoming agenda, and he thanked Mr. Brown again for bringing the homelessness issue to the Board's attention.

Task Force Updates

Chairman Picerno provided opportunity for the commissioners to give updates on their two-member task force work:

Budget Task Force (Picerno and Quis) – Chairman Picerno shared that the Budget Task Force would be meeting following the work session.

Economic Development Task Force (Quis and Von Canon) – Commissioner Quis shared challenges for local employers that had been identified by the Chamber of Commerce. He called upon Partners in Progress Executive Director Natalie Hawkins to offer comment and Ms. Hawkins shared that PIP, and others, had been very involved with the Chamber's assessment. She noted the importance of ensuring employers understood the resources and partnerships that were available to them, particularly through Sandhills Community College and Moore County Schools. It was noted also that housing for the workforce was important, and they were working on it.

Land Use Plan/Unified Development Ordinance Task Force (Picerno and Ritter) – Chairman Picerno said a meeting was scheduled for March 21 at 4:00pm and they would be looking at LUP and UDO inconsistencies. He said once that was complete, he and Commissioner Ritter would look at establishment of a broader task force. Commissioner Ritter said the main effort was to clarify things so people had a clear understanding when they went through the processes of what they could and could not do.

Law Enforcement/Veterans Task Force (Cook and Von Canon) – Commissioner Von Canon noted law enforcement's appreciation of the Board's support. He shared that the task force held a meeting at the Airport with about 28 people from 14 different organizations and commented regarding issues they were trying to address for veterans. He shared that there were working groups working independently that would report information to the task force, including on homeless veterans. There was discussion regarding assistance from Congressman Richard Hudson's office and Commissioner Von Canon noted that his military liaison was very helpful. Commissioner Cook offered positive comments regarding the meeting that was held at the Airport and said everyone was connected now and a blueprint was established.

Legislative Task Force (Cook and Ritter) – Commissioner Cook suggested a meeting with legislators. He also suggested creation of a checklist for legislative issues (to keep track of status/progress). Commissioner Ritter referenced a recently adopted resolution by the Board regarding sales tax exemption and noted it would be helpful to share items that could benefit the whole state with the NCACC, etc.

Opioid Task Force (Quis and Ritter) – Commissioner Quis discussed the Request for Proposals and County Manager Wayne Vest noted that it was now posted and would be for 30 days. There was discussion regarding the continued impact of opioids and Mr. Vest shared the schedule for the selection process for funding.

Chairman Picerno noted that Sandhills Center CEO Victoria Whitt would attend the Board's April 18 meeting to request local funding and he encouraged the commissioners to prepare any questions they had regarding the current mental health crisis and the amount of funding. He asked everyone to provide their questions to Laura Williams, Clerk to the Board, ahead of time.

Solid Waste Task Force (Picerno and Von Canon) – Chairman Picerno provided brief comments and Mr. Vest shared that staff planned to ask the Board to reject the bids for the Highway 5 project and then bid out the project components separately. Commissioner Cook shared that he had reached out to Beaufort County SC regarding their “Green Machine” and was waiting for them to call back.

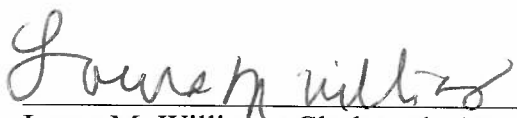
Water/Sewer Task Force (Picerno and Cook) – Chairman Picerno shared that the engineering firm was working on the water sources study. Public Works Director Randy Gould concurred that the water supply study Phase 2 was in the consultant’s capable hands. He offered updates regarding the contract for water purchase from the Town of Southern Pines, on wells that were in the design phase, on the Thurlow Booster Pump Station, and on the task force trip to Robbins to see its infrastructure and how it might fit into plans. Mr. Gould said staff was working with County Attorney Misty Leland on the infrastructure policy. He discussed that the Highway 211 sewer plan was in preliminary stages and ARP funding was set aside for the time that NCDOT did the highway widening. Chairman Picerno asked when a decision would need to be made and Mr. Gould indicated it would need to be before NCDOT began construction, which was anticipated to be after the 2024 US Open. There was discussion regarding need to receive the water supply study report, which was anticipated to be ready by the end of the year. Commissioner Quis inquired about interbasin transfers and Mr. Gould reviewed that information. Brief discussion followed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, upon motion made by Commissioner Von Canon, seconded by Commissioner Quis, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn the March 16, 2023, Special Meeting of the Moore County Board of Commissioners at 11:41am.



Nick Picerno, Chairman



Laura M. Williams, Clerk to the Board



Appendix
A
3/16/2023

Moore County Commissioners Meeting

Thursday March 16, 2023

9:00 AM

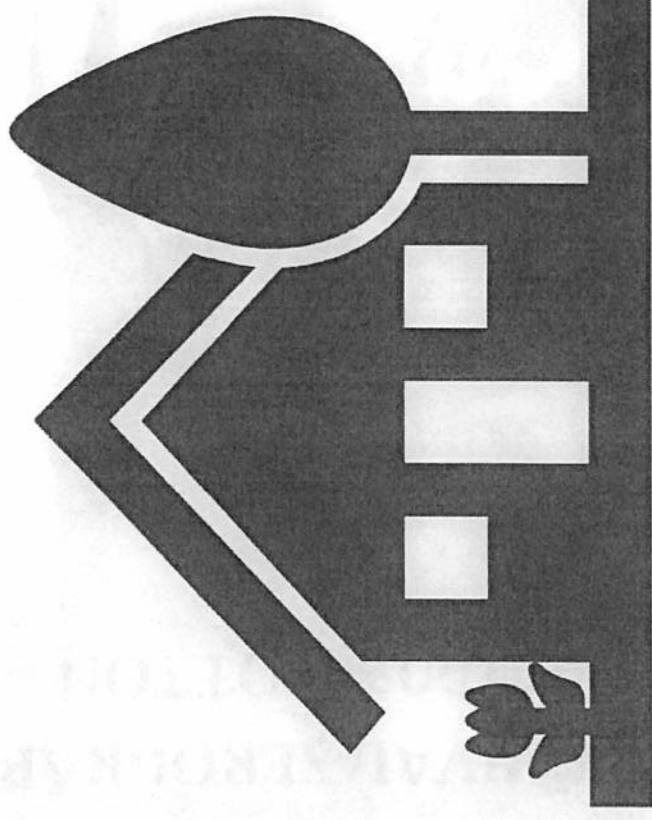
Senior Enrichment Center



Whether Everyone Accomplishes

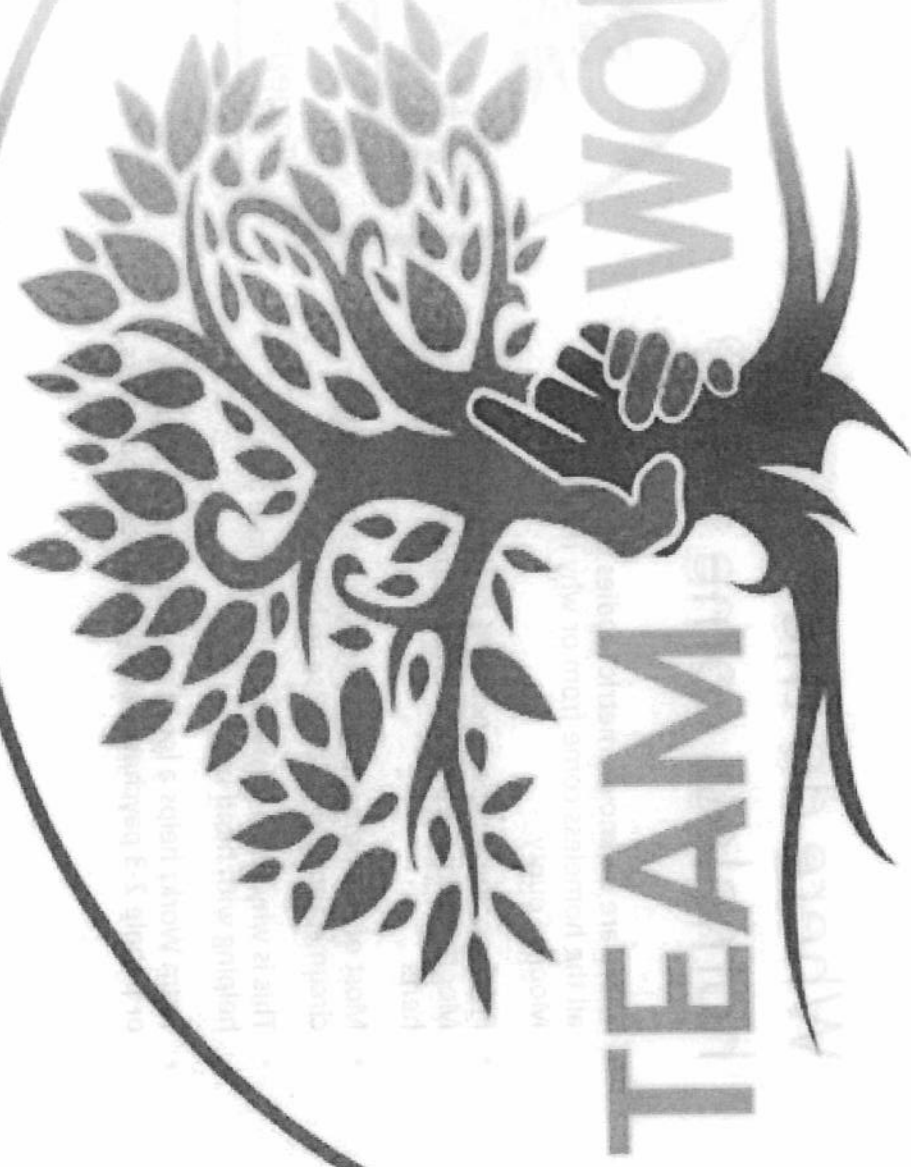
Agenda

- What is homelessness?
- Where do the homeless come from?
- Why are they homeless?
- What resources are available to them in MOCO?
- Where do we go from here and how do WE help them?



What is homelessness?

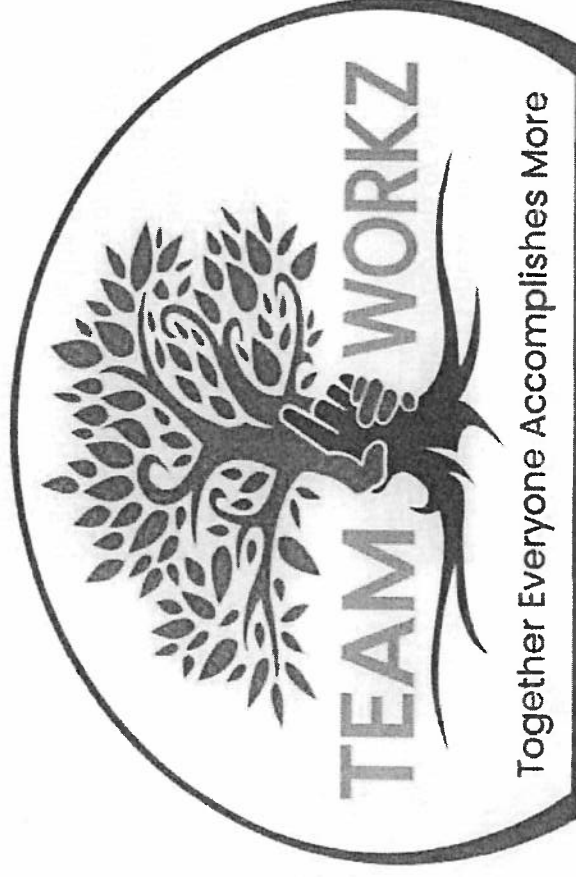
- Sheltered Homelessness – Emergency shelters, housing programs or safe havens.
- Unsheltered Homelessness – Nighttime location usually vehicles, parks or the streets. 9,382 people were experiencing homelessness in North Carolina in January 2022, and an estimated 38.6% of them were unsheltered, the 15th largest share among the 50 states.
- Chronically Homeless Individual- Disabled person who has been continuously homeless for 1 year+ or has experienced at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years where the combined length of time equals 1 year or more.



Together Everyone Accomplishes

Where do the homeless come from?

- There are no known metric studies that show where all the homeless come from or why they come to Moore County.
- From personal experience 85% of the homeless in Moore County are from Moore County or have roots here.
- Most of this percentage have families in similar circumstances or just refuse to help.
- This is why Team Workz is so passionate about helping with hand ups.
- Team Workz helps a lot of pre-homeless. * A family or people 2-3 paychecks away from being homeless.



Why are they homeless?

- Transportation – #1
- Housing cost has climbed to a all time high these past 3 years. The average rent nationwide hit a record at 24% higher this past summer than it was two years ago. Recent studies show a fulltime, minimum – wage worker CANNOT afford a two-bedroom rental any where in the country.
- Education
- Pandemic that shut down our economy.
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Medical/Mental health issues
- Divorce/Death in family

What Resources are available in MOCO?

- Plain and simple – Very little are available to the homeless currently.
- Team Workz is the only organization out in the field working with the homeless like we do.
- Team Workz partners with 20-30 organizations that offer very limited resources.
- These groups do what they can but it's no where near enough to help prevent homelessness or help support any other needs.



What can WE do now?

- Start off small – Secure 10-15 acres for temporary housing. This would get the groups all together and provide more resources for them.
- This will help support with health care, mental health, addiction programs, housing, food, sanitation, and keep them safe.
- Human trafficking is a real problem here in Moore County. Sadly, I have lost several ladies over the last few years.
- By acting NOW as a TEAM: We can head off drugs, crime and violence that can become disease. By providing support NOW we can save OUR people from becoming more exposed to outside elements that we don't want.

TEAM WORKZ – In Closing

- Our plans for the TEAM WORKZ Transitional Advancement Center will offer a solution once it is built but right now, WE all need to become a part of the future solution for homelessness in Moore County.
- We need to become more than a handout; we need to offer a Hand UP!
- How do you see us working together to build a way out for the growing homeless issues we see expanding in Moore County?





TRANSITION ADVANCEMENT CENTER CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN APRIL 5, 2022

Phase-able and sustainable individual dwelling units

Village concept emphasizes personal space and community to support the healing and the transition process

Foot-paths promote therapeutic nature walks while developing a commute to work lifestyle

TAC Hub centrally located where residents gather for worship, daily task delegation, classes, and meals

Medical /Administrative building and Warehouse centrally located for logistics; ideal for disaster response

All structures have Southern sun for passive solar heat

Views oriented South to double window purpose

All locations have sunset views to support healing process

Fishing Village separation offers potential short term rental passive income, providing skill building opportunities and resume building within the campus

Emergency Shelter from Natural and Man-made Disaster
Medical / Admin Building

Team Workz Sign

Orchard

Crop Rotation Fields

Farm-side Village

Recreation area

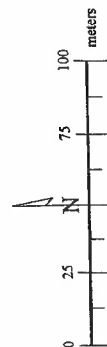
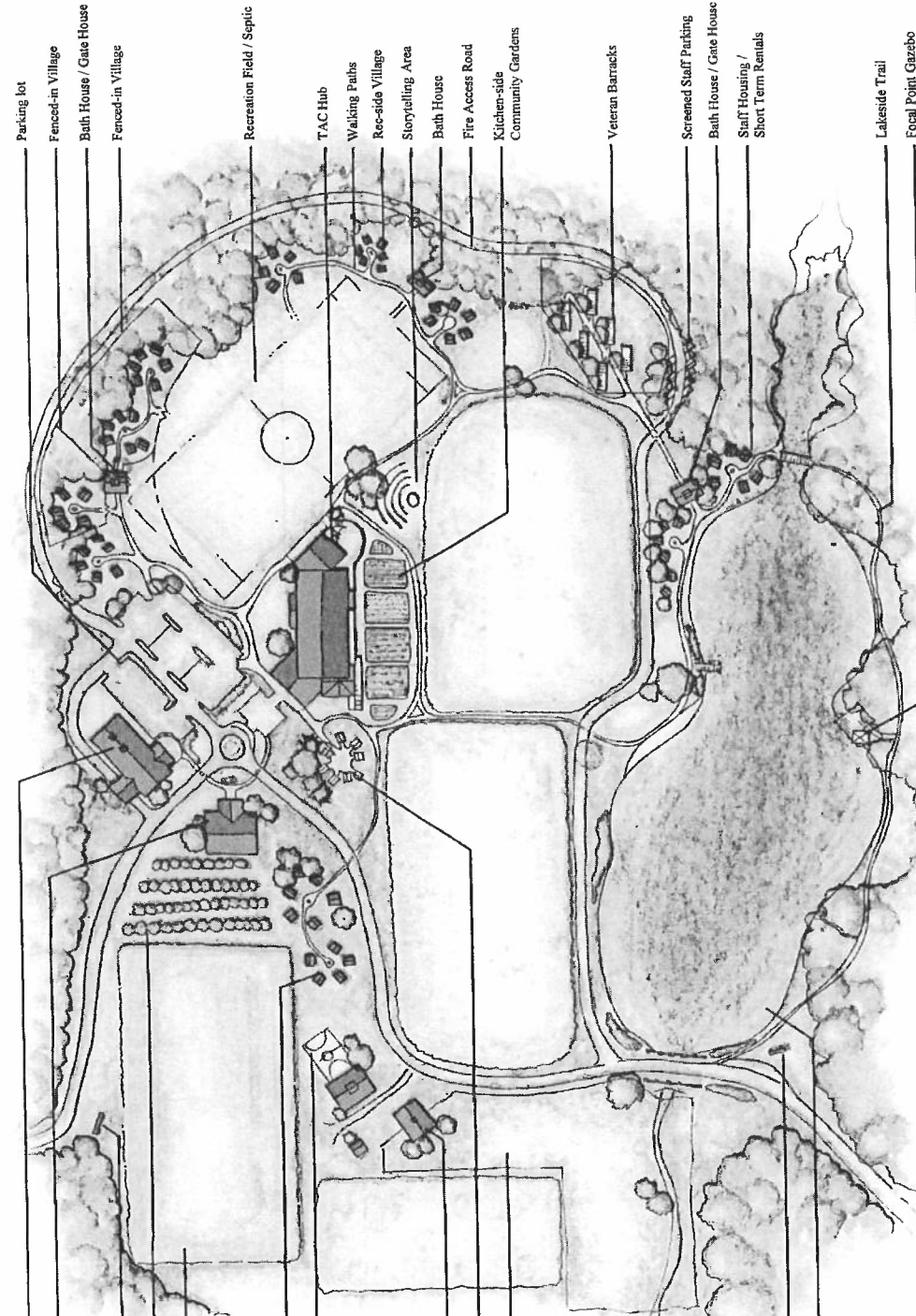
Barns

Accessible Village

Livestock Pasture

Team Workz Sign

Fishing Lake



PREPARED BY: Janet O'Neill